

July 20 while serving with his brigade in Baghdad. In a memorial service at Valley Springs High School, over 200 mourners gathered to pay their respects for this fallen soldier and to comfort his family. He was later laid to rest at Western Grove Cemetery in Harrison, AR.

The loss of this special young man is a sobering reminder of the tragic human cost of war. The loss of any of our brave men and women in uniform is felt by not only their friends and loved ones but also by communities and families across our Nation that they fought to defend.

Words cannot adequately express the sorrow felt in the hearts of the family and loved ones of Derek Plowman, but I pray they can find solace in the courageous way he lived his life. My thoughts and prayers are with his mother and stepfather, Kim and Andrew Campbell, his father, Donald Plowman, his brothers and sisters, and with all those who knew and loved him.

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On July 28, 2006, in Detroit, MI, Julia Lynn Marsh, a male transvestite, was physically and verbally assaulted by three men. According to sources, Marsh suffered injuries to the head after being struck by a crowbar. It appears Marsh was targeted solely because of his sexual orientation.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

#### GULF OF MEXICO ENERGY SECURITY ACT

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, the Senate passed one of the most important bills it has considered this year. We passed legislation that I believe is the most important thing we can do in the near-term to stabilize our energy prices and expand our energy supply.

This is American can-do legislation. With this bill, we are bringing vast reserves of American energy onshore from the American real estate that we own out in the ocean.

We are doing it safely, cleanly, and responsibly. We are bringing this clean energy onshore so our businesses can prosper, our farmers can prosper, and

American families can have much needed relief from high energy costs.

Right now, energy is on all of our minds. Oil prices continue to climb because of instability in oil rich regions. Today, oil hovers at just below \$75 a barrel. Natural gas prices are climbing because of the intense heat in many regions of our country. This week, the price jumped 11 percent in 1 day, and right now it is at \$8.05 per million Btu—that price is four times higher than it was 6 years ago.

Let me tell you why Americans care so much. Between 1999 and 2005, the price of natural gas in the United States increased by 289 percent. At the same time, we lost over 3 million U.S. jobs in the manufacturing sector.

The heat wave gripping our Nation has made energy supply and energy prices a topic of real concern for all of us. As I speak, the lights in the hallways of the Senate and House office buildings are dimmed to conserve energy during this heat wave.

I think it is fitting that during a time of strong national concern over our soaring energy prices, the Senate will pass by what I expect to be a wide margin a bill to bring 1.2 billion barrels of oil and 5.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas to market. Every once in awhile, we get it just right. This is one of those times.

I am particularly pleased that we did this bill in a way that reinvests in our environment. For decades, our coastal States have produced much of the oil and gas this Nation consumes. They will no longer sit back and go along with leasing without the compensation needed to fix the energy infrastructure and coastal environment that is so critical to our domestic energy survival.

Our coastal States provide 27 percent of our oil and 20 percent of the natural gas. MMS estimates that Gulf of Mexico production is expected to rise within the next several years to about 23 percent of our Nation's natural gas production and 40 percent of U.S. oil production.

In addition, our coastal States host nearly 50 percent of our refining infrastructure. The hurricanes last fall and the soaring energy prices afterward reminded all of us how critical the coastal States' production and infrastructure are to our energy supply.

I am pleased that today marks the beginning of the end of the days of turning our backs on our coastal States while we turn our energy dollars over to hostile regimes.

I am pleased that the bill invests a portion of our royalties in the coastal States and the coastal environment instead of forfeiting all royalties and sending that money to hostile governments to buy their energy. I hope the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act marks the beginning of the end of this long cycle of sending our dollars abroad to buy the energy we use here at home.

This bill represents America stepping up to the plate to solve our energy

problems. It opens up 8.3 million new acres to development of nearly 6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.26 billion barrels of oil. We are talking about enough natural gas to heat and cool nearly 6 million homes for 15 years.

The proof of the substantive merits of this bill lies in its broad support around the Nation from America's agricultural community, manufacturing community, producers of chemicals and plastics, the textile industry, the utility sector, and small businesses. Literally, thousands of consumer groups representing millions of Americans and millions of American jobs say the same thing—that S. 3711 provides the much needed relief for the American people.

That is why this bill is right for America. It is right for our national security. It is right for our economy, our businesses, our farms, and our families. I am pleased at the strong support for this measure.

I thank the following Energy Committee staff for their hard work on this bill: Frank Macchiarola, Bruce Evans, Marnie Funk, Angela Harper, Kara Gleason, and Kristina Rolph.

#### NOMINATIONS HOLDS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the plight of countless rural communities in Oregon and across the country may take a turn for the worse due to the impending expiration of the county payments legislation. For this reason, I am putting a hold on the following two Bush nominees to express my continuing dissatisfaction with the administration's lack of attention to the needs of people in more than 700 rural counties in over 40 States: John Ray Correll, Director of the Office of Surface Mining, Interior Department and Mark Myers, Director of the U.S. Geological Services, Interior Department.

In addition, I would also object to any unanimous consent allowing Mr. Correll, Mr. Myers, and Mr. Bernhardt to remain on the calendar. Instead, I request that these three nominations be returned to the White House during the congressional August recess. Rule 31 paragraph 6 of the Senate Rules provides that when the Senate will be in recess for more than 30 days, any nomination in committee or on the Senate Calendar must be returned to the White House unless the Senate, by unanimous consent, allows a nominee to remain on the calendar.

To date, the administration has proposed only one solution to funding county payments, and it is one that many of us find unacceptable. The county payments law, which provides a stable revenue source for education, roads and other county services in rural areas, is due to expire at the end of this year. In early 2005, I cosponsored a bipartisan bill, S. 267, to reauthorize county payments for another 7